

March 26, 2005

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The Advisor

The Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq's Official Weekly Command Information Report

Standing up

Close to 1,500 new recruits
graduating from basic training
complete the initial
'force generation.'

March 26, 2005

MNSTC-I

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Cover: The graduation of three battalions of new recruits at Kirkush Military Training Base brings all 27 battalions of the Iraqi Army into operation. Nearly 1,500 soldiers graduated there March 20.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

Two Years in Iraq: 2005 to be 'Pivotal,' General Says

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The year 2005 will prove to be “very pivotal” in Iraq as the country transitions to a free, representative government with its own police and military forces providing security, according to the chief of staff for Multinational Forces - Iraq.

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Weber told the American Forces Press Service the year already has begun with “a capstone event” — Iraq’s successful Jan. 30 national elections.

The elections, he said, gave the coalition here much-needed verification that their service in Iraq hasn’t been in vain. “The coalition needed that, to see that all our efforts, all our suffering, all our sacrifices made by the coalition forces, the U.S. forces, and all those people contributing over here was worth something,” he said.

The next capstone event, Weber said, will be the seating of Iraq’s new government and the “passing of the baton in the counterinsurgency fight from the coalition forces to the Iraqi security forces.”

The Iraqis’ and coalition’s vision for Iraq’s security forces “is becoming a reality,” he said, as they grow in numbers and capabilities so they are able “to take over this counterinsurgency fight and provide for the security of their own people.”

Iraq’s security forces “are earning their spurs,” demonstrating tenacity as they face insurgents and gaining confidence as they do so, Weber said.

“You just drive up and down Route Irish between here and the embassy and you can see them in uniform. They are squared away, they have their gear, they are very professional in what they are doing,” he said. “And as that capacity builds and spreads,

the people are going to gain confidence in their own security forces.”

During the months ahead, the coalition will focus increasingly on “partnering, mentoring, teaching and building up the capability of these forces” so they have the experience their new roles require.

While acknowledging that the readiness of the Iraqi security forces to take on the mission is the coalition’s “ticket out of here,” Weber stressed that it’s important not to make the transition too quickly.

“We have a lot of time and money and sweat and blood and tears invested over here,” he said. “And ... as we work with the Iraqis and the government and the security forces, we need to be cautious about taking our hand off the bicycle seat way too soon.”

As the Iraqis move forward, and particularly as they form their new government, Weber said it’s important to keep in mind how quickly they’re progressing. After gaining independence, the United States didn’t get a constitution until 11 years later, he pointed out.

In contrast, he said, the Iraqis are striving to “have two or three elections, seat a government, write a constitution, have a referendum, vote on it, then have another election” -- all within a two-year timeframe, he said.

“We as Americans want to come in here and do things very quickly and fix things and apply money and resources to it,” he said. “We want to fix it and leave, and it’s very difficult to do that.”

Weber said confidence in Iraq’s potential as a free, democratic and economically strong country appears to be growing as progress continues — in the government, the security forces and the reconstruction programs under way.

Iraqi workers pitch in to build \$12.4 million Army base

By Nicole Dalrymple
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

As many as 200 Iraqi workers are helping to build a forward operating base for the New Iraqi Army in the province of Salah ad Din.

The \$12.4 million project provides a permanent operating base for the Iraqi Army in one of the more hotly contested provinces of Iraq. The site had structures already in place that will be renovated; several new buildings will be constructed.

Workers are currently renovating the three existing buildings and constructing eight of the 12 new barracks, as well as a new headquarters building. Block and mortar construction is being used for these structures. This labor-intensive method requires more workers, the majority of which are coming from the surrounding communities. The prime contractor received a notice to proceed Nov. 15 and has been working at the site since Dec. 27. Until recently, about 45 to 50 employees were working for the contractor each



As many as 200 Iraqi workers are laboring daily to build a new forward operating base in the Salah ad Din province, which will provide a permanent base of operations for the Iraqi Army.

Photo by CJ McCann, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

day, but the numbers spiked as the more labor-intensive work began.

Construction, expected to take 180 days to complete, is a few weeks behind schedule, officials said.

"At first, delays were experienced because of the security situation and the elections," said CJ McCann, resident engineer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Tikrit Resident Office, which is responsible for the base's construction. "The contractor has been working really hard to catch up and finish by the scheduled mid-May completion date."

The Tikrit Resident Office provides on-site quality assurance representatives to monitor the contractor's performance and make sure the Iraqi people get a quality product.

Two construction representatives rotate in and out on a weekly basis because of the austere living conditions. Despite the conditions, the resident office personnel are excited to be involved with the project, McCann said. In the coming weeks, arrangements

will be made to permanently station two construction representatives and a project engineer on site to manage the construction effort, he added.

In addition to the barracks and headquarters building, a dining facility, shower and latrine facilities will also be added. Site improvements will include a power generation and electrical distribution system, as well as fresh water supply and sewer collection systems. Force protection upgrades will be made to the perimeter security and entry control points, existing roads will be improved, and two new ones will be built.

The base is being funded by the Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq. MNSTC-I is responsible for getting the Iraqi Army, security forces, and border police ready to provide security for Iraq.

"Forward operating bases help the Iraqi forces manage and sustain their forces, and they are instrumental for successful operations," said U.S. Army Capt. Steve Alvarez, MNSTC-I's public affairs officer. "Through MNSTC-I advisors, the Iraqis gain valuable support, anything from professional recommendations, to mission essential supplies like ammunition, to back-up response forces. The bases play a significant role in the development and deployment of the Iraqi Security Forces."



Workers operating the site's concrete mixer contribute to the block and mortar construction of the base's new buildings.

Photo by CJ McCann, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Last of initial 'force generation' battalions on line

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

KIRKUSH, Iraq – With the graduation of nearly 1,500 soldiers at the Kirkush Military Training Base March 20, all 27 battalions of the nine brigades in the new Iraqi Army are now operational.

Graduations last week at An Numaniyah sent more than 3,000 new soldiers to units throughout Iraq and next week, another 600 soldiers are expected to graduate from the Iraqi Training Battalion – adding roughly 5,000 new soldiers to the Iraqi Army ranks.

The graduated soldiers are with the 13th, 14th and 15th battalions of the 5th Brigade, 3rd Division. They took an oath to protect their country, remain proficient in their soldiering skills, and obey the orders of their superiors during the graduation ceremony, the culmination of almost three months of training in basic soldiering skills at the base.

"Training is an essential tool to a combat soldier," said Iraqi Gen. Am Jad, deputy chief of staff for training for the Iraqi Army, in addressing the soldiers. "Be sure to carry everything you have learned here onto the battlefield."

Am Jad urged the soldiers to be "defenders of the defenseless." He also called the graduation, and the completion of the force generation that began last summer, a new turning point for Iraq's Army. He thanked the U.S. and Coalition Forces that make up a base support unit at KMTB for their help in training the soldiers.

"We will be the light to lighten the darkness in this country," Col. Sabre, 2nd Regiment commander, told the soldiers. "We will protect the integrity of this country."

Sabre also thanked the base support unit, the Ministry of Defense, and the people of Iraq "for their belief in this army." He said the soldiers will protect them from terrorism.

"But understand, this will take time, and patience until we eradicate those who are against us," Sabre said. "The strength of our belief will guide us through the threat of terrorism and we will work side by side, force by force, to protect our country."

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Charles Marchione, an adviser with the base support unit, said there was a marked improvement in the soldiers from when they arrived at the base as new recruits. The biggest strides, he said, have come as a result of developing a strong corps of non-commissioned officers. In the old Iraqi Army, NCOs had no more authority than the most basic level soldier, he said.

"Now, we have the NCOs working more with the troops, taking care of their soldiers," Marchione said. "So they've



An Iraqi color guard leads three battalions as they march in review during their graduation ceremony at Kirkush Military Training Base. Nearly 1,500 recruits completed their basic training and are now soldiers in the Iraqi Army.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

made big improvements, but a lot of it is from having leadership."

Marchione said he is confident enough with the soldiers he helped train to go into a fight with them. His greatest fear in going to battle – whether with Iraqi or U.S. troops – is fighting beside people he doesn't know. He doesn't have that fear with the soldiers he watched graduate.

"We have the camaraderie," Marchione said. "That's what's been built here."

The soldiers were released for a short period of leave after the ceremony. Many of them were planning to travel for as much as 10 hours to see their families. Despite that, their spirits were high.

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Battalions

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"I'm very happy," said one soldier, through an interpreter. "I'm ready to go to the fight. I will fight terrorists not just here, but all through the world."

Some were soldiers in the old Iraq Army. They said the difference from then and now is like "blue and white." Now, they are trained to be defenders. They believe they have more technical skills as well, and credit the U.S. Soldiers who trained them.

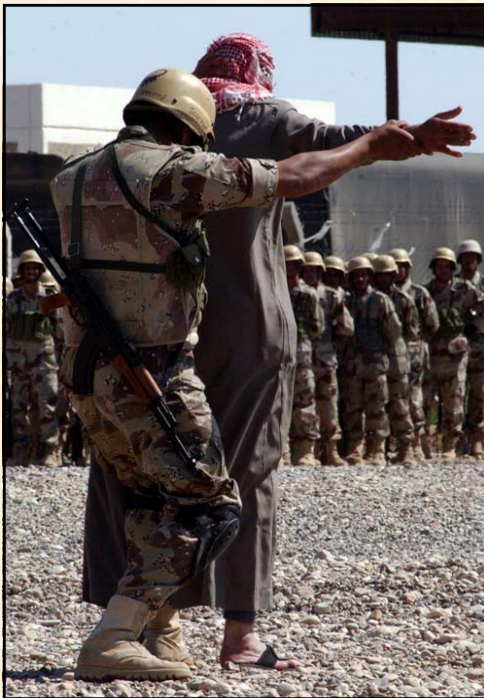
A few soldiers also offered thanks and praise to U.S. President George Bush.

"We like Mr. Bush," one soldier said. "He saved us from the former regime."

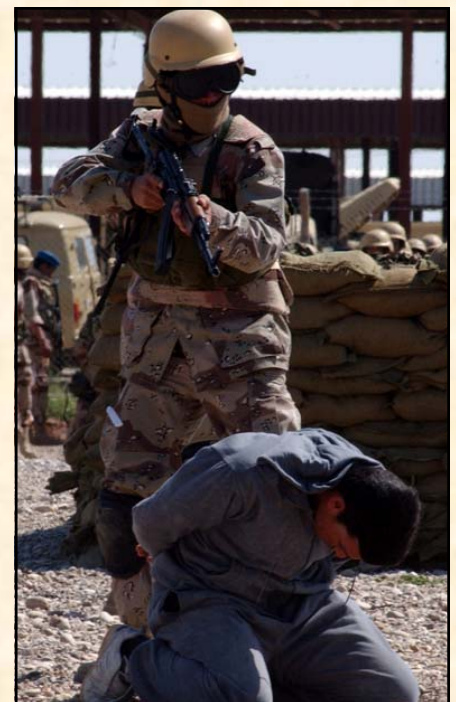


The graduation ceremony at Kirkush Military Training Base included the 13th, 14th and 15th Battalions of the Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 3rd Division. All 27 battalions are now operational.

Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell



The ceremony included demonstrations of skills Iraqi soldiers learned in basic training, to include searching civilians (left) and vehicles (right), storming a building (below), guarding a prisoner (bottom right), getting a fellow soldier to medical care (bottom center). The burning of a terrorist flag (bottom left) prompted applause from the audience.



Zahko graduates 73 second lieutenants for Iraqi Army

By U.S. Army Lt. Col. Sean P. Sullivan

MNSTC-I CMATT

ZAHKO MILITARY ACADEMY, Iraq - With dignitaries and family members looking on, the Military Academy at Zahko graduated 73 new second lieutenants destined to join the Iraqi Army.

Maj. Gen Shihab Ahmed Abdulrahman, commandant of the academy, hosted the March 21 ceremony, attended by about 700 guests.

Founded in 1996, the academy conducts two courses designed to produce officers for the Iraqi Army. The "long course" of 18 months is predominately made up of students who have previous college or technical school experience. The students go through three six-month periods of instruction, starting with a concentration on basic military skills and ending with upper level classes on history, land warfare studies, and tactical warfare planning. The course work emphasizes bravery, drill and ceremonies, and the art of command.

The other course is a three-month "short course" for students who underwent military academy training prior to Saddam's fall. In March 2003, the war interrupted the training being conducted at the Iraqi Military Academy at Ar Rustimayah. This three-year course had an enrollment of more than 500 students.

In an effort led by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, the students enrolled at Ar Rustimayah at the start of the war have been contacted and welcomed back into the Iraqi Army. After a screening period, groups of 100 students have been selected to attend a new 90-day course to be offered at Zahko over the next year. The initial course begins March 28.

Efforts to establish Zahko as a primary developer of new officers have been organized by the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq under the lead of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team. Work to construct additionally housing for the "short course" students is underway and two CMATT liaison officers are permanently



Roughly 700 guests — including a number of dignitaries and family members— were on hand to watch 73 new second lieutenants graduate from the Zahko Military Academy.

Photo by U.S. Army Lt. Col. Sean P. Sullivan

assisting the staff at Zahko to set and maintain training standards.

Guests at the graduation included the President of Kurdistan, the Iraqi Minister of Defense, the Commanding General of CMATT, and representatives from the Turkish military.

New support and services courses begin for Iraqi troops

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – The first class of the new Iraqi Army Support and Services Institute kicked off March 21 with 153 students from the 1st Division of the Iraqi Intervention Force.

The students are divided into six classes – transport supervisors, wheeled maintenance, armored maintenance, supply supervisor, basic logistic officers for supply and basic logistic officer for maintenance and transport.

The 30-day training program is being taught by a Coalition Force team made up of 12 officers and 17 enlisted personnel.

The school was established from a need to create a logistics system that would enable Iraqi Army units to be self sustaining, according to Australian Capt. Ilona Harmstorf, of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq's

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SWAT training nears halfway point; 20 teams to be fielded

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq Civilian Police Assistance Training Team is approaching the halfway point in training and fielding Special Weapons and Tactics teams for each governorate. Seven teams are trained and equipped; two others are currently in training.

CPATT started training provincial SWAT teams in October 2004. These teams complement the national-level Emergency Response Unit by providing a capability for high-risk arrest and hostage rescue to local police chiefs who are normally unable to call on the assets of the ERU.

In Basra and Tikrit, the SWAT team also complements the larger Tactical Support Unit (Basra) and Emergency Services Unit (Tikrit). These units provide more extensive capabilities and can provide an umbrella for operations of the embedded SWAT team.

The program is designed to provide a SWAT team for each of twenty major Iraqi cities, with at least one in each governorate. Each team consists Iraqi police officers, including a captain in command.

SWAT teams receive four weeks of specialized training. Basic human relations and police conduct are emphasized early in the program, complemented with weapons training, mechanical breaching procedures and close-quarters combat. The final week focuses on specialty skills: sniper operations, offensive driving, surveillance techniques and use of intelligence.

After twenty teams are fielded, CPATT's SWAT training program will conclude, leaving recruitment, sustainment and training the responsibility of the Iraqi police chiefs. CPATT will maintain a provincial SWAT training capability, but will transfer it to Ministry of Interior control in December 2005.

Teams are armed with Glock 19 pistols, Binelli shotguns, AK-47 rifles and flash-bang grenades. Teams are also issued uniforms and protective gear, along with vehicles and radios.

Reports from various sources suggest that the fielding of the SWAT teams is making a difference in policing of these major cities. SWAT teams were used as quick reaction forces in Najaf and Al Kut during the national elections and in Basra for a major British-sponsored meeting of Shia and Sunni clerics with local officials and tribal leaders.

Services

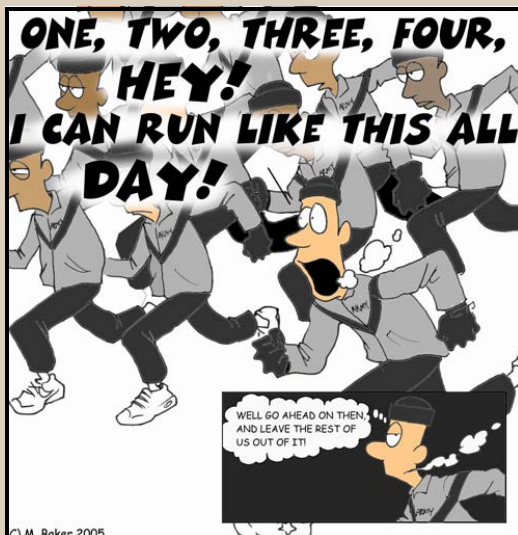
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Coalition Military Assistance Training Team.

Prior to the creation of the support and services institute, the only logistics training available was on a basic level at the Iraqi Training Battalion. This institute offers specialized logistic courses for both non-commissioned officers and officers.

Coalition advisor teams have an essential role in introducing the logistic system and making sure it is effective, Harmstorf said.

"A working logistic system will enable the Iraqi Security Forces to be self-sustaining, thereby decreasing reliance on the coalition," Harmstorf said. "While there is a great deal of training and effort required across all levels to ensure the successful implementation of a logistics system, the benefits to the Security Forces will be substantial."



The Advisor

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Iraqi security forces demonstrate skills for U.S. Senators

By U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Members of Iraq's Security Forces currently training for positions with its Emergency Response Unit gave a group of visiting U.S. Senators an up-close look at the fighting tactics they are learning.

The U.S. delegation joined U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general of the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, for the March 22 demonstration. The ERU recruits showed their marksmanship skills on rifles and handguns, advancing on a target, storming a building, and responding to an attack on a personal security convoy.



U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, delegation chairman, thanked Iraqi troops going through training for the Emergency Response Unit for their willingness to serve their country.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell



Training for the Iraqi Emergency Response Unit includes honing marksmanship skills. ERU members provide security to high-level Iraqi officials and judges.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell



During the demonstration, members of the Iraqi Security Forces demonstrate skills they've learned in advancing on a point at a training area near Baghdad.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

Many of those demonstrating will be working on security details, protecting high-level Iraqi leaders and judges, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ted Westhusing, an ERU adviser. More than 500 have been trained for such details, he added.

"This is serious business," said Petraeus. "These personal security details are very much in the line of fire."

U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., thanked the assembled Iraqi men for their courage and willingness to fight for their country. He said he believes that history will one day show democracy in Iraq as a great achievement.

"We in America want nothing more in Iraq than peace and democracy," Reid said, through an interpreter. "So that this part of the world will change for the better."

Along with Reid, the delegation included Sens. Richard Durbin, D-Ill.; Barbara Boxer, D-Calif.; Patty Murray, D-Wash.; Robert Bennett, R-Utah; Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.; and Ken Salazar, D-Colo.



The demonstration for a delegation of U.S. Senators included a mock forced entry of a building in which suspected terrorists are taking refuge. Delegation members said they were impressed with the skills of the Iraqi security forces.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Lorie Jewell

Iraqi Security Forces / In Brief

Iraqi Security Forces take more responsibility

MOSUL – Iraqi Intervention Force troops from 23rd Battalion, 6th Brigade assumed full responsibility for central Mosul during a transfer of authority ceremony in Mosul Mar. 7.

The ceremony took place on a military base formerly occupied by Coalition Forces, and officially shifted authority from Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment to the 23-6th IIF. According to military officials the transfer occurred due to the readiness of the 23-6th to assume the responsibility. They have demonstrated that through the numerous successful independent operations they have performed, capturing insurgents and seizing weapons.

Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Forces continue operations to protect the rights of Iraqi citizens to live free of fear and intimidation from terrorists. Anyone with information on anti-Iraqi insurgent minority activities should call the Joint Coordination Center's telephone numbers at 513462 or 07701623300.

Raids net dozens of anti-Iraqi forces

BAGHDAD – Iraqi soldiers with the 101st and 104th Battalions captured seven targeted insurgents, along with dozens more suspected insurgents and supporters, in a cordon and search operation just north of Mosul March 22.

The soldiers detained 70 suspects and confiscated three AK-47 automatic rifles and one rocket-propelled grenade.

In a separate operation in Mosul March 22, members of the Iraqi Army's

22nd Battalion conducted a raid that led to the capture of nine suspected insurgents. The raid was prompted by a tip from an informant.

Ambush leaves three insurgents dead

HABANIYAH – Iraqi soldiers returned fire against enemy forces that ambushed them March 20 as they traveled on a road near Habaniyah, killing three insurgents and wounding one.

Iraqi soldiers of the 502 Battalion were ambushed by 15 insurgents traveling in four vehicles. Four soldiers were injured; they were treated and released at a local hospital.

Iraqi soldiers kill three attackers, wound two

BAQUBAH – Three insurgents were killed and two injured when Iraqi forces defended themselves against a March 20 attack involving a car bomb, small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade.

The fighting began with gunfire aimed at a helicopter flying near Baqubah. Personnel on the aircraft

returned fire, followed by the car bomb and small arms fire on the ground.

Twelve Iraqi soldiers were injured in the battle, believed to be a coordinated attack against an Iraqi Army headquarters station, according to a multinational forces report.

Informant leads Iraqi police to weapons

TIKRIT – A citizen tip led Iraqi police officers to a large weapons cache along the Tigris River, just north of Tikrit March 21.

An Iraqi Police quick reaction force team raided the site and found numerous anti-personnel mines, mortar rounds, rocket-propelled grenades and 155mm artillery rounds. An explosive ordnance disposal team destroyed the munitions at the site.

Iraqi soldiers uncover large weapons caches

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with the Iraqi Army's 205th Battalion discovered 70 anti-tank mines, armed and ready, during a March 22 raid in Muqdadiah.

In Baiji, Iraqi Army soldiers discovered a large weapons cache the same day. It consisted of four complete improvised explosive devices, to include 122mm rounds, three rocket-propelled grenade charges, seven RPG explosive cores, four RPG motors and one large bag of propellant. The soldiers also found two anti-tank mines, a PKC machine gun, 11 rocket-propelled grenades, six RPG launchers, one 60mm mortar tube, three 120mm rounds, 10 60mm rounds, one 82mm round and fuses.

Iraqi soldiers with the 3rd Battalion found numerous anti-Coalition and anti-Semitic posters, along with a shotgun, flame thrower and small arms ammunition, while conducting patrols in Fallujah March. 22.



Guardians of oil

A training center in Kirkuk that trains Iraqi soldiers assigned to the oil battalions recently graduated its first group of soldiers from a two-week course. The battalions guard Iraq's oil pipelines.

Photo courtesy of CMATT

Iraqi Security Forces / In Brief

Patrol leads Iraqi soldiers to ammunition

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with the 8th Battalion, 2nd Brigade of the Iraqi Intervention Forces discovered an ammunition cache during a March 23 patrol in Fal-lujah.

The cache included 12 rounds for a large caliber sniper rifle, two 60mm mortar rounds, a metal can filled with explosive powder, detonation cord and a fuse igniter.

Iraqi forces destroy ammunition cache

AL KUT – The 2nd Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal team destroyed a large ammunition cache in the city of Al Kut March 25, according to officials with the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq.

The joint patrol destroyed 97 artillery shells ranging in size from 82 to 122 mm, and 85 rounds of 17.6 mm ammunition.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team received the information from the Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Al Kut. No casualties or damage was reported.

Car bombers thwarted by local citizens

BAGHDAD – A coordinated car bomb attack involving three vehicles heading for the Mussayib Police Station in Ramadi was derailed March 21 when citizens noticed the drivers were not from their local area and helped Iraqi police stop the cars, according to a multinational forces report.

Two of the cars were acting as diversions to allow the third car, which was loaded with explosives, to reach the station. The man driving the car with the explosives was identified as a Palestinian; the other two drivers were Syrian and Egyptian.

The Palestinian attempted to run away, but the citizens who stopped the attack also prevented him from fleeing, the report said. All three were arrested by Iraqi police from the Mussayib station.

Iraqi soldiers seize weapons, suspects

FALLUJAH – Iraqi soldiers patrolling an area of the city detained 50 people for questioning after discovering a large stash of weapons and ammunition.

Soldiers with the 16th Battalion, 7th Brigade detained the men after finding

a cache March 24 that included six AK-47 automatic rifles, four sniper rifles, four improvised explosive devices, five 82mm mortar rounds and five hand-held radios.

A second cache, discovered by soldiers with the 17th Battalion, 7th Brigade, included one AK-47 automatic rifle with ammunition, four 155mm shells, one 120mm mortar, one 60mm mortar, one damaged 81mm mortar and two knives.

Soldiers with the 18th Battalion, 7th Brigade detained 34 men for questioning after seizing 16 assorted weapons during a cordon and search operation with an area Marine unit.

Dogs stop truck with suspicious materials

TAJI – A large dump truck trying to enter an Iraqi Army base was stopped when security dogs detected bomb materials in it, according to a multinational forces report.

Security workers discovered a compartment under the truck containing several switch parts, electrical cords, coils, cans and other items used in building explosive devices. The driver is being held for questioning.

Iraqi soldiers with the 5th Battalion and Coalition military police secured the area during the incident.

Iraqi equipment rollup

A look at some of the equipment delivered to Iraqi Security Forces this week

Ammunition	419,520 rounds	Chevy Luminas	16
Magazines.....	2,500	Chevy SUV Trailblazers.....	62
AK-47s.....	200	Nissan Cabstars.....	8
Pistols.....	330	2 1/2-Ton trucks.....	31
Individual body armor	2,400		